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## Officer dismissed for computer porn

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KADENA AB, Japan (AFNS) -- An officer assigned to the 18th Logistics Group here was recently dismissed from the Air Force, sentenced to three months' confinement and ordered to pay more than \$8,500 in fines after a general court-martial convicted him on charges of obtaining and storing pornographic computer graphics -- including child pornography -- from the Internet.

He was convicted of conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman, and of violating the federal anti-child pornography statute.

Capt. Anthony T. Russell pleaded not guilty to all charges, electing instead to be tried by a panel of officers. Trial convened May 30.

Russell, who was known for his computer expertise and was the group's local area network administrator, used Air Force computer and telecommunications equipment to locate and download the graphics files from the Internet over a two-month period, according to court records.

Prosecutors offered about 100 computer graphics into evidence, including four photographs that a pediatrician confirmed depicted minors. They also presented evidence showing how the captain used his office and home computers to "surf the Net" for sites containing pornographic computer image files.

Other evidence at the four-day trial indicated Russell would sometimes download the images directly to his home computer, or use his office desktop computer to collect the graphics for later copying to his home computer. The accused admitted he used both computers to engage in such activities, but claimed he "stumbled across" the porn sites by accident. However, computer experts from the Air Force Office of Special Investigations in Washington, D.C., showed how Russell programmed his computers to seek out Internet sites with explicit names and file listings.

Remarks made by Russell prior to trial indicating that he had viewed the graphic files showing children also played a key role in the case, prosecutors said.

"Child pornography is illegal everywhere," said Maj. Christopher Mathews, the trial counsel in the case. "Just because we're overseas doesn't mean the rules do not apply. If anything, servicemembers should be especially careful that their actions do not discredit the United States in the eyes of our host country."

An officer's dismissal from the Air Force is equivalent to a dishonorable discharge.  
(Courtesy Kadena Shogun)

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## Web surfing officer nets nine months confinement

SCOTT AIR FORCE BASE, Ill. (AFNS) -- An Air Force officer using his government computer to download pornographic images has learned a lesson he'll never forget and wants others to avoid the same temptation.

On Aug. 24, Capt. William D. Hopkins Jr., 88th Communications Group, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, was sentenced to nine months confinement, a \$10,000 fine and a reprimand for conduct unbecoming an officer consisting of wrongfully and dishonorably using Air Force computer and telecommunications equipment to locate, download and store computer graphics, including pornographic images.

Hopkins plead guilty to the charge and was sentenced by a military judge sitting alone at his request.

In an open letter written while in confinement, the 23-year veteran admitted he violated the rules by using government equipment for personal purposes, and hopes his story will convince others tempted to misuse government computers to think twice.

Looking back, Hopkins wrote, he now realizes that he was falsely justifying his actions at the time of misuse.

"I told myself it (using the computer) was okay because I'm only using it after working hours; I'm not causing a loss to the government -- the computer won't be used up because the hard drive can be erased and used again and again; I'm not making any money by what I'm doing; and besides, I know other people in my work center who are doing it," Hopkins wrote.

Over time, while using the computer to access large archives of information for work, Hopkins stated that he became aware of the multitude of nonofficial information that exists on the internet and began using his computer to download erotic pictures.

Hopkins' illegal web surfing began as a brief diversion from a hectic work load, but eventually began downloading erotic pictures more frequently.

"In a sense, I was using my government computer as a screen for my electronic 'men's' magazine. It was like having the magazine hidden in my desk and, when no one else was around, taking it out to look at the pictures, and then putting it away," Hopkins wrote.

According to Hopkins, his "terrible mistake" has cost him much more than a simple monetary loss. The loss of trust and respect that now scars his lifetime achievements in the Air Force convinced him to try to sway others from making the same mistake.

"Essentially, I can't be trusted to continue my career in the Air Force. I doubt (anyone) can imagine the embarrassment I feel," wrote Hopkins.

In January, the Air Force distributed Air Force Instruction 33-129, Transmission of Information via the Internet and will soon publish AFI 33-119, Electronic Mail Management and Use. The AFIs contain specific guidance regarding use of the Internet and e-mail as a government resource and as such should be for official business or authorized use only.

Every member is responsible for complying with these publications, according to Air Force Communications Agency officials.

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